



SECURED BY DESIGN SECURITY ADVICE GUIDE

Gardens

Theft of property from gardens can be a problem, but having spent time and money on your garden you also need to consider its security.

The value of equipment, structures and plants in gardens often amounts to thousands of pounds. Most household insurance policies only offer limited cover for garden-related items. However, there are several things that can be done to improve security in the garden and your shed – most of which are relatively inexpensive.



Key security features for gardens include:



Boundaries and access

The first line of defence against theft is to make sure property boundaries are secure, particularly to the rear, where people are often less watchful.

Fences



Fences need to be of solid construction. It is recommended that fences to the rear of your property are 1.8m and to the front no higher than 1.2m. Trellis topped fencing can be useful where more open fencing is required to allow for greater surveillance. If the fence is constructed of panels which slide into the supports, then these must be securely fixed to prevent these panels being removed or manipulated upwards to gain an access point. Low-growing thorny shrubs at the base of fences, windows and drainpipes, will also give added protection and anti-climb products could be used in vulnerable areas.

All timber employed in the manufacture of the fencing should come from a FSC certified sustainable sources.



Drives and pathways

Gravel drives and paths make it very difficult for an intruder to approach a property quietly.

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Gates

Keep gates shut and locked whenever possible, especially those allowing access to the rear of the property. Fit two quality locks to a gate, top and bottom, and ensure hinges are securely fixed to gate posts so that the gate cannot be lifted off its hinges. A lock that is capable of being operable by key from both sides of the gate for security and practicality is an ideal choice.



Lighting

At the front of your property, install security lighting operated by a daylight sensor. At the rear of your property, because it is more secure and private, Secured by Design encourages, wherever possible, the use of the most environmentally friendly light sources. Try to position lighting so that it is not a nuisance to neighbours or a distraction to road users.



Mark your property

Garden tools and other power tools such as lawn mowers and strimmers are often recovered by the police but it is difficult to trace the original owner. Security marking your tools using an SBD recognised forensic asset marking or etching kit is another highly effective and visible deterrent to thieves and an established method of reducing theft. Property marking also helps identify the owner, gaining evidence to assist in a prosecution.

Tools and other property can be registered on SBD approved "Tool and Asset" databases. These systems can assist the Police to trace stolen property and importantly prove it was stolen with the aim of getting the item returned to its owner.



Plants, trees and containers

These can be very attractive to a thief and difficult to secure. If you are buying expensive plants or trees and intend planting them into plant pots, then buy the heaviest you can. Expensive plants should be planted where they can be seen from the house or neighbouring properties. Pots can be secured with an anchor through the drainage hole - most are based on a permanent stake to which an item is chained or bolted.



CCTV

Technology which allows you to monitor your home and property has changed considerably in recent years. The Internet of Things [IOT] now includes Wi-Fi doorbells and camera systems. These can be linked to your phone and tablet to alert you to any activation and view your property in real time.

The installation of closed circuit television (CCTV) which can be linked to your television or video to view your garden is an alternative. If you do decide to use CCTV, it is important to read the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) advice on Domestic CCTV systems – "Guidance for People Using CCTV".

<https://www.securedbydesign.com/guidance/crime-prevention-advice/vehicle-crime/cctv-security-advice>



Keys

Lastly never leave spare keys hidden in your garden, garage or shed for children or family members. If hidden keys are found by an intruder and used to burgle your home you may find your home insurance is invalid.



Tools & Ladders

Don't make a burglar's job easier by leaving gardening tools lying around as these are often used to force entry into home – a garden spade can do a lot of damage to a door or window in a short space of time. Remember most burglaries are committed at the rear of the home. Don't leave ladders outside or, if you have no alternative and have to, chain them up.

For further advice about any of the security tips listed above, or to find out how to buy police recognised security products, visit

www.securedbydesign.com

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